IN THE CLAIMS

Kindly amend the claims to read as follows.

1. (cancelled).

2. (previously presented): A process according to claim 8, wherein component A is a sulfonate of the formula (I) where at least one of all the R^2 radicals present is $-SO_3^{\ominus}M^{\oplus}$.

3. (previously presented): A process according to claim 8, wherein component A is a sulfonate of the formula (IV)

$R^6R^7CH-CR^6R^7-(-CR^6R^7-)_w-H$ (IV)

where w is from 1 to 3, one of the R^6 radicals is an unsubstituted phenyl radical and all the other R^6 radicals are hydrogen, and one of the R^7 radicals is $-SO_3^{\ominus}M^{\oplus}$ and all the other R^7 radicals are hydrogen.

4. (previously presented): A process according to claim 8, wherein component A is sodium cumenesulfonate or potassium cumenesulfonate.

5. (previously presented): A process according to claim 8, wherein component A is a dihydric or trihydric alcohol of 4 to 8 carbon atoms.

6. (cancelled).

7. (previously presented): A process according to claim 8, wherein the composition includes, per 100 parts by weight of water (component D). the following amounts of components A, B, C, E, F:

5 to 35 parts by weight of component A,
10 to 40 parts by weight of component B,
3 to 30 parts by weight of component C,
0 to 30 parts by weight of component E,
0 to 20 parts by weight of component F.

8. (currently amended): A process for the pretreatment of fiber materials in the form of textile sheets, said process being performed prior to manufacture of enduse articles from the sheets, which comprises treating the fiber materials with a composition including at least the components A, B, C and D,

where component A is either a sulfonate of the formula (I)

$$R^1R^1R^2C\text{-}CR^1R^2\text{-}(\text{-}CR^1R^2\text{-})_n\text{-}R^1 \qquad (I)$$

where n is from 0 to 8, each R^1 is independently of the others hydrogen, an alkyl radical of 1 to 4 carbon atoms, an unsubstituted phenyl radical or a phenyl radical substituted by a radical of the formula $-SO_3^{\ominus}M^{\oplus}$, and each R^2 is independently of the others R^1 or a radical of the formula $-SO_3^{\ominus}M^{\oplus}$, subject to the proviso that component A contains at least one radical of the formula $-SO_3^{\ominus}M^{\oplus}$ and M is Na, K or NH_4,
or where component A is a polyhydric aliphatic alcohol of 2 to 12 carbon atoms,

component B is an ethoxylated alcohol of the formula (II) or a mixture of such alcohols

$$R^3\text{-}O\text{-}(\text{-}CH_2CH_2\text{-}O\text{-})_r\text{-}X \qquad (II)$$

where r is from 1 to 8,

component C is an alkoxylate of the formula (III) or a mixture of such alkoxylates

$$R^3\text{-}O\text{-}(\text{-}Z\text{-})_t\text{-}X \qquad (III)$$

where t is from 4 to 30, 20 to 80% of all the Z groups present are $-CH_2CH_2$-O- and 80 to 20% of all the Z groups present are $-CHR^4\text{-}CHR^5$-O-, where in each case one of R^4 and R^5 is hydrogen and the other is CH_3, R^3 in both component B and component C is a linear or branched alkyl radical of 4 to 20 carbon atoms and 50 to 100% of all the X's present are hydrogen and 0 to 50% of all the X's present are a methyl, ethyl or phenyl radical,

and component D is water,

and optionally also a component E and/or a component F,
component E being a magnesium salt or a calcium salt and component F being an alkali metal salt or ammonium salt of a sulfuric monoester of the formula (V)

R^8-O-SO_3H (V)

where R^8 is a linear or branched alkyl radical of 4 to 12 carbon atoms,
whereby good primary wettability without unacceptable foaming and good rewettability are imparted to the pretreated textile fiber materials.

9. (original): A process according to claim 8, wherein the fiber materials are 70 to 100% by weight cotton.

10. (cancelled).

11. (original): A process according to claim 8, wherein the fiber materials are textile wovens or knits.

12. (previously presented): A process according to claim 8, which is carried out prior to a dyeing step.

13. (previously presented): A process according to claim 8, wherein the composition includes, per 100 parts by weight of water (component D), the following amounts of components A, B, C, E, F:

10 to 25 parts by weight of component A,
15 to 35 parts by weight of component B,
5 to 25 parts by weight of component C,
2 to 20 parts by weight of component E, and
2 to 10 parts by weight of component F.

STATUS OF THE CLAIMS

Claims 2-5, 7-9 and 11 are pending in this application.

Claims 2-5 and 7-8 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Stringer et al. (U.S. Patent 5,858,955).

Claims 9 and 11-12 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Gosselink et al. (U.S. Patent 5,691,298) in view of Stringer et al.

Claim 8 has been amended.

Claims 2-5, 7-9 and 11-13 are presented for reconsideration.

REMARKS

The claims have been amended in accord with the current rules in which underlining shows additions and strikethrough shows deletions.

Applicants have amended their claims in order to more particularly point out and distinctly claim their invention. Thus, claim 8 is directed to *a process for the pretreatment of fiber materials in the form of textile sheets, said process being performed prior to manufacture of enduse articles from the sheets,* and now recites at the end, "*whereby good primary wettability without unacceptable foaming and good rewettability are imparted to the pretreated textile fiber materials*". This amendment is supported by the disclosure on page 3, lines 4-8, and by the exemplification. No new matter has been added.

Claims 2-5 and 7-8 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Stringer et al. (U.S. Patent 5,858,955). Reconsideration is requested in light of the amendment *supra* and the following remarks.

The examiner states on page 4, first paragraph, of the Office Action that the recitation, ".... prior to manufacture of enduse articles ..." occurs in the preamble, and that a preamble is generally not accorded any patentable weight where it merely recites the purpose of a process. But the passage "prior to manufacture of enduse articles ..." does not recite a purpose of the inventive process. It